

ECFS Comment on Broadband over Power Line

As an FCC-licensed amateur radio operator, as well as an electrical engineer holding advanced degrees, I am extremely concerned about the apparently favorable position of the FCC on the issue of Broadband Over Power Line (BPL) technology. Beyond the alleged ability of BPL to bring affordable high-speed Internet access to a broad segment of consumers, this technology has no redeeming social value. Other services, including DSL, cable data and wireless networking, will offer the same access, and, if offered by providers at more attractive rates, will serve an increasing number of Internet users.

BPL has far greater negative aspects than positive. The most critical issue is the demonstrated potential to cause havoc in the HF spectrum via harmful interference as a result of radiation from outside power transmission lines. Clearly, not only the Amateur Service will be impaired. Other HF spectrum users, including public services and government, will suffer. The serious interference problem is clearly behind the decision by Japan and many entities in Europe to ban the use of BPL technology. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national organization representing a large segment of the licensed amateurs in the U.S., has vehemently opposed the approval of BPL. As the agency charged with oversight of not only the Amateur Service, but most other communications services in the nation, the FCC should change its position on BPL, join other countries that have considered the serious disadvantages of this technology, and disapprove the deployment of BPL in the U.S.

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